

GAMELAND RIDE
Game Lands No. 44, Elk County

Description: This is an enchanting, historical ride whose attractions include laurel-tunneled single-track, caves, scenic overlooks, boulders to climb and a stretch of one of the finest rail-trail this country can boast.

Distance: 8.7 miles

Time: 2 hours

Trail Type: Dirt roads, double and single-track

Comments: This ride requires a lengthy climb at the start but after you reach the top, it is loaded with one rewarding surprise after another. The entire ride uses smooth dirt roads, non-technical single-track, and a manicured rail-trail that is closed to vehicles. The Rail-to-Trails follows the Little Toby Creek and also includes boulders to climb, caves to explore, awesome overlooks and a historical stone quarry where you can see the massive steam engine that was used to lower rocks down the mountain.

Access: From Ridgway follow Route PA949 west for 7.9 miles. Turn left onto a gravel road 100 yards before you come to the Little Toby stream. Follow this road for 1-½ miles. Pass the state game lands yellow and brown service garage and park at the gate.

Mileage Log:

- 0 Cycle around the brown gate and begin a long hill climb. Pace yourself it's a long way to the top.
- 2.8 Ignore the two roads leading off to the left. A blue brine tank is directly ahead. Stay to the right of the brine tank.
- 2.9 Ignore the road to the right and continue uphill.
- 3 At the second road to the right after you pass the brine tank and just before you come to the pipeline, turn right.
- 3.8 At the uphill Y stay right and head uphill.
- 4.1 You see a pipeline with a blue pipe sticking from the ground. Turn left and follow the gravel road down through the clear-cut area.
- 4.7 You come to a T in a clear-cut area where another blue gas pipe sticks up. Turn right and skirt the edge of the forest.
- 5 Immediately after you pass the pipe, the road T's. Turn right and begin to follow the orange blazes.

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5.1 The orange blazes guide you to a single-track on your left. This trail is called Indian Rock Trail and it gradually winds downhill.

5.4 Look for an orange arrow directing you to the right. It points the way to a spring 30 yards off the trail. Take a break and fill your water bottle.

5.9 Sharp drop-off here.

6 The trail Y's. Turn to the left, following the orange blazes uphill. To the right is a side junket that leads to caves, overlooks and boulders. It's about 400 yards back and too steep for a bike but it's worth the walk.

6.2 This abandoned rock quarry offers an outstanding view of the Little Toby Valley below. Follow the rim of the quarry to the left for 50 yards and you will come to the remains of an old steam engine used to lower quarried stone down the mountain to the railroad below. After your tour, follow the orange-blazed trail downhill.

6.3 Make an immediate left opposite the orange arrow on a rock. Make another left on the trail with blue diamonds and orange blaze.

6.4 There is a Y in the trail. Turning left leads back to the quarry. The trail to the right is marked with a blue diamond. Turn right following the blue arrow and wind down off the mountain to the rail-trails below. A word of caution: This is a very steep descent and, although it is completely ride able, there are 9 hairpin turns that require respect. Missing one of these could earn you a very quick trip off the mountain.

7 At the bottom of the trail on your left are the remains of an old stone crusher. Scattered roundabout are foundation stones of all that remains of a small town called Grove. The site was abandoned in 1929. Further into the woods and due south of the trail is a concrete tank filled with water from a nearby stream. This tank was used to water livestock, now it refreshes thirsty cyclists and hikers.

8.3 Turn right and cycle up to the CCC camp and Game Commission facilities. At the dirt road, turn right and pedal up to your vehicle.

8.7 Finished!

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